

## August Showers by leslie057

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**Summary:**

Afflicted by his worsening supernatural episodes, Jonathan spends a night with his girlfriend, Nancy, during the final weeks of August 1988.

## August Showers

August 1988

He faltered in the underbrush, his walk weak. Remembering what had just happened was hard, but remembering his own name was harder. Was all of this real? And why was he in the woods? Sparrows sang without pause, slowly abrading his consciousness. There was a feeling of copper in his mouth and throat. His veins contracted—is that lightning?—as he rubbed at his closed eyes.

His jaw clenched over and over until his surroundings changed. His headache went away. Weighing nothing in this new sanctuary, he looked out into the vast, black expanse. He was engulfed in darkness and on his knees in an inch of saltwater. He focused on a form in the distance, lip quivering. Whimpering surged into his ears. He stood up swiftly and started walking. As he came to the figure, he ceased. A slaughtered rabbit with pale, downy fur was beneath him. Crouching next to the animal, he swallowed nervously. His jeans were unaffected by the water, but the small creature was absolutely wet, its blood eddying around them. He asked himself where the sound had derived from; this rabbit could not make any noise.

And although he had not touched its skin yet, he discovered a roseate film on his hands. Looking to his right, looking ahead, he heard gunfire out of nowhere. He picked up the rabbit, holding it directly against his flat stomach. Cradling it in his arms, he kept his gaze downward. There was blood all over his upper body, red, corrupting, and did he say red yet? The shots rang out for several minutes before they stopped, and footsteps replaced them. His heart banged against his chest unbridledly. The anonymous character slinked up behind him and audibly cocked their rifle. Suddenly, terrible pain struck him. His arms were heated, and his hands were burning. The closer the individual got to him, the more he suffered for it, getting hotter and hotter and hotter and...

"Jonathan!" He looked up quickly to find that he was not in darkness, not in the woods like earlier, but in front of his old house, in the summer grass, and in a storm. "Jonathan! What the hell? It's raining!" His girlfriend, Nancy, positioned her hands on his neck. "What

happened? Are you alright?" He felt the cool rainwater drip from his bottom lip as he panted, looking around anxiously.



"It happened again, didn't it?" Nancy rammed the front door into its frame as he stood in the entrance of the house. Wiping his mouth on his wrist, he could still hear a cry. For him to sit down was Nancy's muffled command, or so he guessed, for the sound was giving him hearing troubles. Anyway he took direction, gripping the vertical bars of an old wooden chair before seating himself on the edge of it.

Nancy searched unsystematically through a drawer, speaking for a few seconds, but all he could recognize were swear words. After she finally turned to him, he sensed greater apprehension in her. "Did it happen again?"

Sounding mousy, he responded, "I, uh, I...no. I mean, I-I'm not sure."

"Jonathan," she said in a stern voice. He stared at his forearms, trying not to be as demonstrative as usual. He pretty much wore his heart on his sleeve most of the time. Nancy breathed out drowsily and stood in back of him. "Well, at least let me dry you off." She threw the fleecy wash cloth she had been holding over his head and rubbed on both sides vigorously, shaking out the water in his hair and tousling it more. "Christ, Nance," Jonathan muttered, and she left it on the countertop. Faking an apology, she sat beside him. "Second time in ten days?"

"Yeah," he finally admitted, working his jaw.

"Listen, let's just talk to Jane, okay? Please?" Nancy brought up the subject in desperation, knowing what he would say. "No," he told her fragilely.

"Wh-" She caught herself being too loud. "Why *not*?"

"It's complicated."

"It doesn't have to be. You're getting worse, and you're not letting anyone help. It's just like what happened to your brother, just like what happened to *Will*," she said, adding emphasis to the last part

and standing up. He stood likewise and claimed that everything was fine on account of he was fine.

"No, okay, no! This is affecting you. Your migraines are worse, and you don't think I notice, but I know you're on sleeping medicine. Even with that, you still can't get more than a few hours at night!"

"The last time we...were in danger...here, it was years ago. If we talk about this, it-it's just gonna worry everyone sick."

"If we don't, you're going to get sick."

"This is all in my head," he whispered.

"What if it's not?"

"It is."

"What if it's not," she pressed on, stroking the drenched material of his shirt, which clung to him. "Your episodes weren't as strong in East Village, right? There is something here. In Hawkins. What's going to happen when this month's over? I go back to Philadelphia, you're in New York, and something is still here?"

He blinked immoderately at her, not availing himself of a single word.

"Look, if you let me talk to Jane about it, I promise we won't say anything...to anyone...at least for a little while." She was still clutching the fabric on his abdomen. Head lowered, he quietly gave her his assent. She hugged Jonathan suddenly, evoking a wince from him because of the recent soreness in his upper body. "Oh! Sorry, I...wasn't thinking." Making a mental note to be more careful, she placed her hands on his shoulders. "Why don't you...um...take a shower? Calm yourself down, get some dry clothes?"

"Nance, I'm fine."

"You're soaking wet!"

"You were outside some, too," he reminded.

"Not as long as you. Go."



Listening to the shower running, Nancy sat down on the gray couch. The house was cleaner than she had ever seen it, yet there were still books and things on the floor.

She took a deep breath, wishing she were closer to her family. She pictured Joyce raising her boys by herself in this restful house. Joyce was still raising one of her boys here. On that subject, Nancy wondered about how Will was doing with the other guys back at her old place. And she wondered about Joyce and Hopper, who were in Lafayette to attend the wedding of a man named Lyle, their friend from high school.

Nancy then thought of her boyfriend's father. Why weren't Joyce, Jonathan, and Will enough for him? She studied the lamp in the corner, its glow veiling the room in soft light. Jonathan and she only had a few more weeks in Indiana, and then it was back to their colleges (their separate colleges). They had been long distance for years, and these breaks made her remember how it felt to see him everyday. So it was always difficult to go back and be away from one another all over again. And if the delusions continued to pull wool over his eyes, would New York be intolerable? He would not be alone; he shared an apartment with two guys named Samuel and Corey. They were both photographers like him. But Jonathan was too down to earth for them. Besides, it was *more* than just not being alone.

She reprimanded herself for not paying attention to him earlier. He had mumbled something about needing fresh air, and if she had actually been listening, she would have realized that he was trying to get away from something because who goes outside into heavy rain?

Taking her out of her reflective thoughts, Jonathan entered. His shirt fit him snugly, she noticed, and his ashy brown hair was damp. Anyone else would have said he appeared weary, but she decided he looked perfect and asked him if he felt any better. "Not really, but drier, at least," he answered lightheartedly. She watched as he retrieved a blanket from the floor and draped it over a chair to get it out of the way.

"Hey, Jonathan, come sit with me," she said, pushing a strand of her

silky hair out of her face. Joining her where she was seated, he asked her if she was okay. "Yeah, I'm fine." She crossed one of her legs over the other. He settled himself with his arm around her.

"Can I ask you something?"

"Course," he replied.

"What was your parents's divorce like?"

He inhaled sharply and could not stop himself from asking what she meant.

"Tell me about your dad."

"Wh-what...about him?"

"What was he like?"

"Nancy..."

"I just...feel like I should know."

"Right," he agreed. "Um...he...he was someone who...liked to be in control." Jonathan's wording seemed deliberate to her. "He...wasn't ready to have a family. He was dishonest, and...he took advantage of mom. He liked doing it. He liked scaring her," Jonathan explained, leaving space between his sentences.

"How come they married?"

"I've never asked her. I think he was different then. She just wanted to...help him. She felt like she had to. She..."

"She thought it would work itself out?"

"Exactly."

"And you and Will?" She prompted.

"He was...*irresponsible*...as a dad. And forceful. Will wasn't even 4 years old, and I remember him cursing at us. It was just...there wasn't a lot of quiet."

A look of realization washed over her. "Was he physical?"

"Yeah," he disclosed. "I'm not angry at him anymore. I just...don't want him near us."

She furrowed her brow. "And what? You were just never gonna tell me?" Her voice was unstable, and she shifted, which he saw as a signal to remove his arm from her waist. "I can't believe you never said anything. Why didn't you say anything?"

"Well...I didn't....really want you to know."

The liquid mascara on her eyelashes was more prominent as she dropped her gaze. This was his last intention. She looked back up at him with solemn eyes. "You didn't *want* me to know?" Lightning flared, and the lamp flickered. He strayed from defending himself because he was sure he was at fault.

"Now, I know we struggle with time. I mean, I haven't seen you for more than 4 weeks in a row since we were in high school. But we've known each other for so long. And I...I don't understand." She walked to the window and closed the see through curtains as the thunderstorm intensified. Regretful, he stood up as she went on. "Were you hoping I didn't ask or something? Because there's no way the girl with the perfect family would get it, right?"

He looked in her eyes with sincerity. "I-it was wrong of me to not share it with you until you asked. That was wrong." Her shoulders heaved as she tried to gain some control over herself. "Look, I appreciate that. You know I do. But...it's...it's really important to me that we're close. Do you know how important that is? That I'm close to you? That I know you can depend on me, trust me?"

"I didn't want you to act differently around me once you found out."

"Of course I want to act differently around you! Your family is broken!"

She shouted impulsively. She stuttered a little and began to wring her hands. "Jonathan, I-I'm sorry. I...didn't mean that, I swear." He had no idea what to say and focused on a tipped over laundry basket on the floor between them. "Really. I didn't," she trailed off. Leaning with

her back against the wall, Nancy searched for a way to make him feel less vulnerable. "Why aren't you saying anything? That's how arguments work, y'know," she said sarcastically.

He felt a rush of cool air sweep through from the hallway. The AC had been acting out for most of the season. She became displeased with her thinly strapped top and jeans combination.

"I'm smart enough not to get on your bad side, Nance," he told her quietly, making a vague gesture as an imaginary gun at his side.

"Yeah," she laughed lethargically, her hands in her pockets. There must have been something interesting about the floor, since Jonathan did not stop staring at it. "And...also," he began. "I can't get angry at someone who's being honest."

"Hey," she shot back, assertive. "That wasn't honesty." They had been inching toward one another and were very near. "What do you call it?" His question was barely audible. "I love your family. I love them," she assured under her breath and kissed him. Jonathan caught her lower lip above his own. Anytime her spontaneity surfaced, it disoriented him. Somewhere within him, he knew that she was hurting. And that she liked to use intimacy to shut that out. Unlike usual, he was going to let her.

It left him at a loss when she whispered "thank you" against his lips. Instead of asking what on earth it was for, he pressed his palm to her head. It was enjoyable, feeling like he was protecting her. She locked both arms around his neck, and he massaged her scalp with his fingertips. His breathing became shaky before he could help it because of the clicking noises she was making in his mouth.

She had transferred almost all of her weight onto him, and he realized that she would lose her balance if he were to let go of her. It was rough on his shoulders, but he did not care.

Right then, the electricity went out, and they were left in darkness. It obviously startled her, but she collected herself soon afterward. "We're safe," Jonathan vowed lowly into her ear and brushed his lips there to get her spirits up again. The authenticity of it all—of him—gave her some confidence. Although the storm she was still afraid of



because what else could the storm mean? What if there was something else threatening them?

She kissed him, creasing his shirt as she grasped it too strongly. The gentle sounds from him made her blood run warm and feel splashy. He jabbed at her chin with his, their tongues laced. She grabbed his trembling hands and pushed them in the air, urging him to walk backward.

They went to his former bedroom, which was empty save for a bed and dresser. The walls had been repainted with a dusty blue color. From the second they entered, they could feel a cooler temperature. And there was a complete absence of light except for that of the street lamps coming in through the blinds on the window. Why was the power gone in only his house and not outside?

Pressed to the door, she locked it, merely to make herself feel better. Nancy's mouth roughhoused with Jonathan's. She was avid for him, nibbling, biting, sucking at his narrow lips. Their tongues made contact again, and that did the trick for him. A combination of love and attachment arose in him, and the way he was handling her showed it. Caressing her arms, resting his forehead on hers. He opened his mouth to give her more access to his tongue, and when he did, she closed down on it. Nancy was a messy kisser at times, and he could taste her lipgloss. But he liked how assured she was around him.

"Up," she enjoined to the corner of his mouth. His hesitation let her know that he felt too weak to do what she wanted. "Try." He gripped her waist on both sides and lifted her to the best of his ability. After carrying her to the bed, he set her down in the center of the mattress. He got on his knees at the edge of the bed. She kneeled, as well, tugging her top over her head. He raised his arms so she could free him of his shirt. Jonathan was defined and even muscular yet very thin. It mirrored his nature; he was brave but not in a swaggering way.

He discarded his jeans with unexpected agility, and she removed hers just as rapidly along with her underwear. "Can you...lie down?" He requested against her neck warily. She nodded, and then reclined in the left side of the bed. Soon he was lying next to her. Without

warning, he kissed her above her stomach, and she suppressed a gasp. He kissed her side, her shoulder, and her collarbone, his unkempt hair hanging over and tickling her all the while.

Areas of her skin were wet from the kissing, and when she was exposed to the air, a tingling sensation ran through her body. He looked expectantly up at her as she looked helplessly down at him.

"Off," she directed breathily. He stood and, knowing what she meant, shoved his boxers down before returning to her in the bed. They were both sitting upright among the folded covers. Nancy licked softly at his earlobe, her hand shaped like an 'L' on his jaw. He turned into her because he liked it, and she pushed his head back to where it was, unfinished.

He had known this girl forever, had been with her for an impressive length of time. But it was almost never that they had nights like this. So when they did, he always wanted to make them perfect.

She very subtly blew air onto his ear, going from side to side. "Whenever you're ready," she whispered gently, her lips moving against the curved part of his ear. He turned over so that he could suspend himself above her, balancing on toned arms. She could see nothing but his silhouette on top of herself. Their arousals were synchronously aggravating and nice.

"You're sure?" He murmured huskily.

"Need you," she sounded out, the thunder outside crashing so roaringly it shook the house like a leaf. Possibly it would have frightened her, but that was not the case; he was in her. They were united, *joined*.

She anticipated guiding him because of the lighting situation, but he had not needed any help.

His face hidden in her shoulder, she drank in the bittersweet fragrance of his cheap hair conditioner and the relief of enclosing him. They rocked their hips softly as she tangled her hands in his cold hair.

Feeling 17 years old, she let herself forget about anything she had ever worried over.

The world was tough on her, and she was tough on herself. She would go through phases of anxiety, have alarming dreams, and go too long arguing with her family. Yet the world also brought Jonathan to her. So it evened out.

Eventually, he withdrew. Nancy's heart was racing all throughout her.

□

The summer thunderstorm had died down and been replaced with rain so fine it was like a spray.

His blanket that they had made a mess of was left gathered up on the floor, ready to be washed later. As he sat on the edge of the bed, he threw his shirt and boxers on, eyelids heavy.

Without him noticing, she stole a cottony shirt from his duffel bag on the floor that said *UNITED STATES AIR FORCE* in faded letters. It was actually one of Joyce's shirts that she had given to him before he left for college.

Nancy glanced at the small clock on the windowsill. The numbers changed to 11:50. It felt like later for some reason. She moved over to his space in the bed and rested her chin on his shoulder, hugging him from behind. "Hey."

"Hey," he offered almost silently.

"How are you feeling?" She asked, combing through his hair in upward strokes with her fingers. He shrugged. "That bad, huh?" And they laughed to themselves. "D'you feel like you'll be able to sleep tonight?"

"I'm...not sure. Usually, if it's the night of when I have the..."

"Episode?"

"Yeah. If it's the same night, it's hard to sleep." She frowned and let go of him. He reached over to the dresser and tried the lamp. It flickered on. "H-hey! Power's back," she said joyfully and gave him a crooked smile as he yawned. She was happy that it was because he

always looked handsome after lying down for a while. She liked the way his clothes were wrinkled and the way his eyes were glassy and the way his hair was nowhere near as tidy as it was before.

"Wanna get up?" She touched him on the shoulder. He looked at her. It was a caring look. Eye makeup was smeared all over her lower lash lines, but he thought she was stunning. "It's not all that late, and the longer you keep yourself awake, the more your body will want to rest..."

"Um, y-yeah. I-if you want to."

□

He embraced Nancy on the couch, laying his head on her as she occupied herself with one of Will's old coloring books and a box of oil crayons that Joyce had saved up to buy him years ago. Letterman played on the television and was close to muted; they did not like the program, but they liked the TV being on.

"Have you talked to your mom since Monday?"

"She said she was going to call Will and I, but she hasn't," he clarified, watching her scribble as if it were something that deserved his undivided attention. "Not yet, anyway. She will, though. Everything's fine. She can take care of herself."

"And the chief's with her."

"And the chief's with her," he repeated through a sigh of acceptance. She skated across the paper with the wax, filling in Green Lantern's suit and staying perfectly inside every line. "Really lucky," she mentioned. "After so much, they have it all figured out."

"I don't think they have it *all* figured out."

"Well, what do *you* know? You're just a college kid!"

"And you're a college kid who still likes coloring books," he retaliated playfully, sitting up and admiring her with kind eyes. "Hey! Statistics show that when a person completes an artwork, the severity of their stress decreases," she conveyed. "Very smart, Nance," he mumbled

against her wavy hair. "Do they show that when you stay up too late because your boyfriend does, the severity of your stress increases?"

"Hmm, no...I don't know anything about that," she announced as he swiped the red crayon so that he could assist her. "And I'm not staying up for you. I'm staying up because I'm not tired." He nodded understandingly, shading over the superhero's hair. "Um, by the way," she said. "I know I kind of pressured you into it earlier, but still, you told me the...the whole story. You told me right away. That's all I really care about. I was never mad at you."

"You weren't?"

"No. I'm sure mad at your father, though," she huffed.

"Well, if you ever see him, I give you full permission to strike."

"Seriously? Because I will personally take a trip to Indianapol-"

"Wait, wait! If you ever see him unintentionally, then you can strike. Forgot who I was talking to for a second."

"Damnit!" She exclaimed and ran her oil crayon down his forearm. "Na-ance!" She immediately locked their lips so as not to give him the chance to get revenge on her. He hardly tugged away, bringing about a millimeter's distance in between them. Distracting her by rubbing at her hip with his left hand, he dragged his crayon down the bridge of her nose with his right. She blinked rapidly, pulling away and stumbling over her words. "W-we were even, jerk!"

"Now we are," he claimed, nuzzling the diagonal line he had drawn across her face.

"Is this what it would have been like if we were friends in kindergarten?"

"Surely," he responded, getting a Kleenex from the end table and cleaning off her nose. After getting up to throw the tissue away, he found her sitting up straight on the couch with a sad expression. "Nancy?"

"Yeah?"

"Something's wrong?"

"Hm? Uh...no. Just thinking about September," she replied, standing up. "I really don't want to go back."

"I know," he said solemnly as she enveloped his waist. "It'll be hard to leave everyone."

"Promise me something?" He nodded, holding her. "When we go to school again, no matter what it is, if there's ever anything that you need to talk about, I want you to call me. I want to be the first person you tell everything to."

"I promise, Nancy."

#### **Author's Note:**

I haven't posted writing in a very long time, but I hope to more as I am on summer break now! Thank you for reading, and feel free to message me in the comment section. You could include a prompt for a new fic or simply your thoughts on this one.

-Leslie